



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

September 7, 2001

MESSAGE FOR NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

As Americans everywhere celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, I am pleased to lead the U.S. Department of Transportation in observing this important event.

Americans of Hispanic descent, a people rich in diversity, have contributed much to the wealth, good fortune and cultural heritage of this country. This heritage comes to us from both individuals and families, the first of whom came to our shores nearly five hundred years ago.

This year's theme is "Paving the Way for Future Generations." National Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity to commemorate and pay tribute to an important part of America's cultural tradition, offering all Americans an opportunity to recognize the qualities and contributions of Hispanic Americans from the earliest years of this country to the present. The loyalty, patriotism, and devotion to family so typical of Hispanic Americans buttress and enhance our quality of life and the American way.

Today, 35.3 million Americans of Hispanic descent represent 12.5 percent of the population. While we have seen the Hispanic population grow dramatically, the Federal workforce does not reflect this same trend. To meet the transportation challenges of the 21st Century, the Department is seeking to attract and retain members of this group and others. Hispanic Americans are paving the way for future generations in expanding America's transportation network through their great contributions to the world of transportation.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is also an opportunity to reaffirm a work environment where all employees are valued, where each is treated with dignity and respect, and where all have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Please join me during National Hispanic Heritage Month by participating in planned events celebrating the rich diversity of our workforce, our Nation's greatest strength. Nuestra diversidad es la fuerza de nuestra Nación! (Our diversity is the strength of our Nation!)

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Norman Y. Mineta', is positioned above the printed name.

Norman Y. Mineta